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C O N F I D E N T I A L SECTION 01 OF 02 WELLINGTON 000931

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STATE FOR D (FRITZ), EAP/FO, EUR/RPM, AND EAP/ANP
NSC FOR VICTOR CHA
SECDEF FOR OSD/ISD JESSICA POWERS
PACOM FOR J01E/J2/J233/J5/SJFHQ

E.O. 12958: DECL: 11/23/2016

TAGS: [ASEC](#) [PREL](#) [PGOV](#) [FJ](#) [TN](#) [NZ](#)

SUBJECT: GNZ TOUGH BUT PESSIMISTIC ON FIJI'S BAINIMARAMA

REF: WELLINGTON 924

Classified By: DCM David J. Keegan. Reasons: E.O. 12958, 1.4
(b) and (d).

11. (U) This is an action cable, see para 7.

12. (C) Summary: GNZ anticipates that Commodore Bainimarama will execute his plan to remove members of the government of Fiji on December 4 regardless of what he hears from foreign critics. New Zealand Foreign Minister Winston Peters will meet with Bainimarama on November 25. While Peters will deliver strongly worded points (reftel), MFAT anticipates that Bainimarama will refuse to listen and that he will remain resolute in carrying out his plan. GNZ will adjust what sanctions it will impose depending on how the coup unfolds, but anticipates strong sanctions even if there is an "administrative coup." MFAT sees that the situation in Tonga is stabilizing -- for the moment -- and continues to develop an assistance package and timetable for withdrawal of defense and police forces.

Grim on what lies next in Fiji

13. (C) Following a briefing on Fiji and Tonga to the diplomatic corps, Heather Riddell, Director, Pacific Division, New Zealand's Ministry of Foreign Affairs and Trade (MFAT) offered a supplemental brief to Embassy Wellington officers. On the subject of Fiji, MFAT has concluded that on December 4, Commodore Bainimarama will execute his plans for a coup, mindful of the fact that events may move more quickly if sedition charges are laid against Bainimarama. MFAT is grappling with what technically would constitute a coup, but would view any change prompted by military pressure as at least an "administrative coup" -- with sanctions likely to come close those involving a full coup.

14. (C) Tomorrow, November 25, New Zealand Foreign Minister is scheduled to meet Bainimarama one-on-one at his office, although MFAT doubts that the Commodore will be in a listening mode. The GNZ assesses that Bainimarama is resolute on carrying out his plan. MFAT anticipates providing Embassy Wellington with a download of the Peters meeting as soon as possible.

15. (C) If a coup takes place, GNZ anticipates as one worst case scenario that New Zealand would receive a request from PM Qarase for joint Aussie-Kiwi military assistance. "This is not a scenario we would relish," said Riddell, "as we would not necessarily prevail." MFAT is mindful that its military is now spread thin, and Riddell said New Zealand would resist the call for assistance. Another worst case scenario would see the Republic of Fiji Military Forces (RFMF) fragmenting and turning on itself, which could turn violent.

But somewhat optimistic on Tonga

16. (C) Following the King of Tonga's speech from the throne on November 23, in which he requested from Parliament a proposal on reform including a timetable, MFAT's view is that the situation in Tonga is stabilizing. NZAID continues to develop a package of assistance. GNZ is anticipating to withdrawal defense and police forces in the near term, but still does not have a timetable. Associate Minister for Pacific Island Affairs Winnie Laban indicated to DCM the evening before that she is not optimistic about Tonga, anticipating that it will be difficult to develop the kind of development program that will enable Tonga to become economically sustainable.

Action Request: UN Resolution

17. (C) MFAT understands that EAP/ANP Director Steve McGann and New Zealand Embassy Deputy Chief of Mission Ian Hill have discussed a possible UN resolution. MFAT would welcome more

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information about that discussion, and believes that a UN resolution would make it easier for the British to change their travel advisory for Fiji.
McCormick